

REMARKS

In the aforementioned Office communication, the examiner requested an update of information on page 1 in the first paragraph as required. Such information has been provided herein.

The examiner has further rejected each of claims 1-16 in the application under the judicially created Doctrine of Obviousness-Type Double Patenting as being unpatentable over the claims of US 6,112,797. A Terminal Disclaimer, along with the fee in the amount of \$110.00, relating to US 6,112,797 has been enclosed herewith and, accordingly, this rejection of the claims is felt to have been overcome.

The examiner also objected to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) in that the drawings did not show the embodiment of the invention wherein at least two strings were spaced from the sheet of material with the second longitudinal edge of the vanes being attached to the strings. As will be appreciated, new Figs. 38 and 39 are enclosed herewith in an informal state and with the approval of the examiner, the new figures will be formalized after an indication of allowance. Note there are two figures which have been added with one being directed to the embodiment where the vanes are attached to strings and another where they are attached to strips of fabric. Support for these Figures is found in the specification on page 23 paragraph [0110]. Accordingly, the objection to the drawings is felt to also have been overcome.

Each of claims 1-16 has also been rejected based on the prior art patents to Croxen, Brown, and British Patent No. 1,494,842. Some of the claims have been rejected under Section 102 and others under Section 103. The claims in the application have been amended herein and are felt to be patentably distinct from the prior art.

Further, a new claim 17 has been added which is also felt to be distinct from the prior art for reasons which will be explained hereafter.

Before addressing the amendments to the claims and the subject matter of new claim 17, it is felt appropriate to briefly describe not only the present invention, but also the prior art relied upon by the examiner. In the present invention, at least one sheet of fabric is provided for use in a panel that is in turn used in a covering for an architectural opening with the sheet of fabric being disposed in adjacent parallel relation with either a second sheet of fabric, a series of strings or a series of strips of fabric and wherein a plurality of spaced, parallel, longitudinally-extending fabric vanes interconnect the sheet of fabric with either the second sheet of fabric, the strings, or the strips of fabric. The vanes have longitudinally extending edges as well as first and second sides and the first sheet of fabric is connected to the vanes along one edge and on one side of the vane. The second edge and the opposite side of the vane is connected to either the second sheet of fabric, the series of strings, or the series of fabric strips as the case may be. It will therefore be appreciated that the fabric can assume an S-shaped configuration and in doing so biases the fabric toward a closed position wherein the first sheet of fabric and either the second sheet of fabric, the series of strings, or the series of fabric strips, as the case may be, are disposed in closely adjacent relationship. All of the above is clearly described in the specification.

In the prior art cited by the examiner, the patent to Croxen is of interest in disclosing a venetian-blind type product that utilizes rigid slats that may be of S-shaped transverse cross section. The blind does not include fabric. The patent to Brown is of interest in showing a window shade utilizing a roller. The British '842 patent discloses a

blind having a sheet of material that is interconnected with a plurality of vanes with the vanes being connected to the sheet along one edge and on one side of the vane. A pair of cords pass through perforations near the opposite edge of the vanes and are provided for moving the vanes when the cords are moved relative to the sheet of material. Other embodiments of the blind have the vanes connected to the first sheet in various ways but such other embodiments are of less relevance to the present invention.

Referencing the claims in the present application and the amendments thereto as set forth in the present amendment, it will be appreciated independent claims 1, 7, and 16 have been amended to state that the vanes have first and second sides as well as first and second longitudinally extending edges and wherein the first side along a first edge is secured to the fabric sheet and the second side along the second edge is secured to either a second sheet of material or at least two strings. The vanes are also described as being capable of assuming an S-shaped configuration whereby movement of the sheet of material relative to either the second sheet of material or the strings as the case may be causes movement of the vanes.

Claims 2, 3, and 6 are dependent upon claim 1, claims 8, 9, 12, and 13 are dependent upon claim 7, and claim 16 has no dependent claims. The dependent claims of course incorporate all the features of the independent claim from which they depend and are felt to be allowable for the same reasons as independent claims 1, 7, and 16.

As will be appreciated in the prior art, there is no disclosure of S-shaped vanes, which have one face secured to a sheet of material along one edge and a second face secured to either a second sheet of material or at least two strings along a second

edge. Note particularly, in the British '842 patent, near the second edge, the vanes have strings passing through perforations therein but are not secured on a second face along an edge to strings. The window shade in the Brown patent has the edges of its slats connected to either a sheet or strips of material so they are not connected on one side or the other to the sheet or strips of material and the Croxen patent has its vanes notched to be connected to strips of material along edges of the notch. Again, they are not connected to one side or the other of the vanes along an edge thereof. Accordingly, it is felt that each of claims 1-3, 6-9, 12, 13, and 16 are patentably distinct from the prior art.

Independent claim 14 has been amended to state that at least some of the strips are capable of assuming an S-shaped configuration and wherein said at least some of said strips bias the covering toward a closed position. The prior art, of course, is devoid of any suggestion of the use of vanes for biasing two sheets of material into a closed position wherein they are disposed closely adjacent to each other and further are capable of assuming an S-shaped configuration. Therefore, claim 14 is felt to be patentably distinct from the prior art.

Claim 15 is an independent claim which states that at least some of the strips in the covering are capable of assuming an S-shaped configuration and have edge portions as well as a central portion and wherein the central portion and the edge portions have different physical characteristics. This is certainly not shown or suggested in the prior art and accordingly claim 15 is also felt to be patentably distinct from the prior art.

New claim 17 describes a panel for use in a covering for an architectural opening wherein the panel includes a sheet of fabric and a series of strings or strips displaced from one another and positioned in a parallel plane spaced from each sheet. A plurality of spaced parallel, flexible, longitudinally-extending fabric vanes have a first edge attached to said sheet and a second edge attached to said series of strings or strips to support the flexible vanes along the second longitudinal edge. The prior art does not show vanes connected along an edge to a series of strings or strips even though the British '842 patent does disclose strings that pass through perforations in the vanes adjacent to an edge. More importantly, however, the British patent discloses only the use of two cords or strings which probably works with rigid vanes of the type illustrated in the British patent, but certainly would not work with flexible vanes as provided for in claim 17. In the present invention, it was not contemplated that simply two strings could support the flexible vanes but rather a series of such strings or strips of material so that the vanes are adequately supported along an edge to assume a linear or near linear configuration. Providing simply a pair of strings as disclosed in the British patent would allow the second edge of the vanes to sag undesirably from an aesthetic standpoint. Accordingly, inasmuch as claim 17 is directed to a panel that has flexible vanes supported along an edge by a series of strings or strips, it is felt it is patentably distinct from the prior art.

With regard to new claim 18, it will be appreciated it is directed to a panel having first and second vertical, substantially parallel fabric sides which are reciprocally movable between open and closed positions and wherein in the closed position, the sides are closely adjacent to each other and in the open position spaced from each

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other and further wherein the panel includes a plurality of vanes having longitudinal edges with the edges being secured directly to the fabric sides and wherein at least some of the vanes assume an S-shaped cross-sectional configuration in the open position of the panel. The prior art does not show S-shaped vanes having edges that are secured directly to parallel fabric sides of a panel. Accordingly, it is felt claim 18 is also patentably distinct from the prior art.

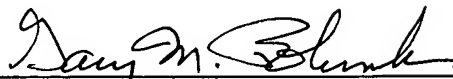
Having responded to each of the examiner's objections or rejections of the present application, it is felt the application is now in condition for allowance and such action is courteously requested.

A request for a two-month extension of time is also made, including the fee in the amount of \$430.00.

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Respectfully submitted,



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